NBC NEWS SPECIAL REPORT- HOSTAGES ARRIVE IN ALGIERS (1-20-1981)(8:02 P.M E.T - 9:31 P.M E.T)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U)

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From Tuesday , January 20th, 1981 NBC NEWS Special Report of the release of the 52 American hostages which had been held in Iran for 444 days. The hostages officially were released at 12:08 P.M E.T, January 20th, 1981. Landing in Algiers, Algeria at 8:17 P.M E.T.

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news here are nbc news correspondents roger mudd and john chancellor good evening we are told that the algerian aircraft carrying the 52 american hostages released in iran today has arrived at bulmedian airport in algiers and we're going to try to show you pictures of that airplane now there is the picture that is being fed to us and on to you by algerian television we the information on precisely what we're seeing is sketchy but we do know that from two different sources that at about 15 or 18 minutes ago the plane the air algerian 747 plane carrying the hostages from a refueling point in iran landed at the airport you are now looking at so somewhere in there are the 52 americans roger john we're really flying by the seat of our pants watching this picture come in this is live satellite feed and jim bitterman who is the nbc correspondent been following this story for the last weeks and nights is on the ground there we're going to try to get jim bitterman to tell us what's happening because he's closer than we are jim this is olympic jet and uh on [Music] it's a chilly and blustery night here in algeria just a few moments ago it started raining down quite hard with me is nbc news correspondent keith miller and it is for us uh

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it is for us uh people who have covered both the revolution in iran and this hostage story for more than years i'm sure for many people out there very dramatic and i think exciting evening despite the uh rain that's coming down and we are still waiting for the hostage plane as jim just said this is not carrying the hostages embassy here a very good idea that's going to happen tonight we understand that this allure jet may be carrying uh the doctors who flew to iran on friday night to examine the hostages they're the first people from the outside who had seen the hostages for some time and they gave the hostages some examinations over the weekend and we expect to see them uh get off the plane here shortly also to be handled and i have to expect the algerian delegation ahead of us like a former industry washington who is key in the negotiations here basically what we think is going to happen when the hostage plane arrives is that the hostages will be let up into a vip lounge which is right off the tarmac and there are american officials in there we believe we include the american ambassador uh here in algiers as well as one christopher and the others here the american officials will take about a half hour during which time they will identify the hostages and the hostages will have a chance to rest and have a drink then uh the foreign minister the algerian foreign minister mohamed yaja who has been so instrumental in negotiating the hostages release will make a speech which we're

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release will make a speech which we're being told could last up to 20 minutes uh and then the hostages will be taken over to some c9 medevacs that are waiting here these are planes that have been brought in from frankfurt and uh are the hospital ships the nightingale hospital ships that have been brought in from factories and medevacs will then take off for the flight to wine line air base in frankfurt west germany that flight takes about 2 hours and 36 minutes and uh we will be on the ground here about an hour and a half we believe before they get off on their way to uh ryan mine you might not have to wonder what this does for the psychologists who have kind of a complete decompression program that has to do it must be kind of a shock to step out of what is virtually a prison and uh into an airplane and suddenly within the space of six or seven hours be confronted by the growing life of the press as well as the officials who are speech making this train like they said is not the plane that contains the hostages but a jet a small private executive jet that has uh we believe on board the doctors who examine the hospitals doctors who we have been searching for the last couple of nights to try to find out exactly what condition the hospitals might be in well i think they go inside the vip lounge where they were identified by embassy staff will be to keep the time on the ground and now jews are minimum and uh try to get them on their way to uh wine line as quickly as

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for this part of the possible i would think the hostage point would be not too far behind because i think the doctors have stayed with their hostages pretty much now since uh they first examined them on sunday there's a different behind schedule at this point it's quite a windy night here and the rain is just coming down cats and dogs right now uh so that may be delaying things somewhat uh we've had some problems with uh our technical equipment here caused by the weather but it doesn't look like anybody's going to come off that plane maybe we'll throw it back to you in washington bitter men who are reporting from the airport the bermudian airport in algiers that obviously was not the hostage plane it was a plane that both keith and jim suspect is carrying the algerian negotiating team or the doctors or the doctors they also report to very heavy winds and high rain which both are causing an apparent delay in the arrival of the uh of the big plane carrying all 52 hostages from all indications there are 52 on board is that well we get that from we get that through robert mccloskey the american ambassador to athens who did not himself get aboard the plane but had one of his staff people get aboard the algerian 727 when it stopped in athens to refuel they distributed 75 copies of the newspaper stars and stripes to the hostages which is probably the

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is probably the first uncensored outside newspaper they have seen in 444 days and counted them and the word that came to ambassador mccloskey and then on to us is that all 52 are aboard one of those planes further the official algerian news agency announced this evening that a the 52 americans had arrived at algiers airport and that would have been their time at about 12 46 a.m which would have been about 25 minutes ago new washington time so they're there somewhere i'm beginning to wonder if in all that rain with these people whose medical condition may not be flawless that they're trying to arrange trucks to bring them in or some kind of transport or buses to get them in and that may be the delay because earlier this evening roger we saw the chairs 52 chairs all lined up in the reception room there at the airport and we've already been told that the foreign minister plans to make a 20-minute speech the algerians are justifiably proud about all of this so that it may be one of those small hang-ups it is taking place however not only after midnight algerian time but something like three or four o'clock in the morning tehran time so those hostages are going to be exhausted when they get through with this and put on those nightingale american medevac planes and take it on to wiesbaden john the arc news desk advises us that a bulletin has come through saying that the hostage plane is about to land within a minute or two and judy woodruff is uh standing by at the white house and she's got something fresh i guess from the new reagan reagan white house judy well it's not really new roger i just thought it might be helpful at this point to recap some of what the new president said today about the developments in the hostage crisis

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developments in the hostage crisis earlier this evening here in the oval office on his first visit to the oval office reporters asked him how he felt about the whole thing and he said it had made his day absolutely perfect and he mentioned that he has gone ahead and had the the christmas tree that was uh that i think president carter first lit in honor of the hostages one year ago he has had it lit again today even though of course we're long past the christmas holiday it's it's interesting and we might want to talk for a minute about how the reagan administration is dealing with these with the conclusion of the hostage crisis they are not willing to say at this point how they're going to observe the arrangements that were made by the carter administration we assume that that because the deal was struck that that we have done all we can do that it will be observed but the president's national security assistant richard allen said in a briefing here today that he really didn't want to comment much further than that reporters were saying well you know we we all obviously noticed that the hostages were released that the deal was struck before mr reagan became president but the hostages weren't released uh until after he was in office does that mean that that some of it may come unstuck and he said i really don't want to talk about that it may also be interesting that it seems to me that the reagan administration is to some degree keeping its distance uh from the conclusion of this national nightmare they are not sending an official representative to germany to greet the hostages uh there is one member of the of the transition team who uh who was advising the president-elect then on foreign policy judy dr kenneth edelman who's going but but no official representative yes roger sorry uh one question that occurs to me at the briefing this afternoon the question came up about why president reagan referred to the hostages as

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reagan referred to the hostages as prisoners and they the the briefing officers brady and alan did a little uh toe dance about that what do you make of that i really don't know what to make of it i i noticed it as you did and as brady pointed out uh it was reflective of the posture that governor then governor reagan now president reagan took throughout the campaign on the on the hostage situation uh he he referred to them as as prisoners uh talked about the national humiliation we don't know what that will mean now well judy you know uh with not wanting to further this it just seemed to me perfectly consistent for mr reagan to call them prisoners because he's talked about an act of war against the united states an act of hostility that's been condemned by international courts all along i think prisoners just comes easy to him it also may mean a continuation of his calling than barbarians and kidnappers which some people say may have helped the carter administration finally resolve this um the crisis that's true very tough language from him judy thank you if you'd stay there please we want to go now to uh to marvin calp john one of the principal things that has come up here is the whole role of algeria that is obviously critical in understanding of the manner in which the hostages were freed and it's interesting to point out that algeria has always been very proud of its reputation as one of the most radical states in the arab world um anti-us anti-israel and its propaganda line and its role in helping free the american hostages uh clearly is not expected to change any of that what will change indeed what has already begun to change and for the better is algeria's relations with the united states and algeria's general image in the international community trade between the u.s and algeria is expected to go up the

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and algeria is expected to go up the united states is already algeria's top trading partner the united states may provide aid to algeria and may defer debts uh in fact just before secretary of state former secretary of state muskie left for west germany tonight i asked him whether there had been any deal struck between the two sides and he quit pro quo and the secretary said and i just would like to quote this for a second he said there has been no quit pro quo but our appreciation for the qualities the people the leadership of algeria i'm sure will lead to a very positive very healthy and productive relationship uh he said that there was no deal however uh and he added the words we are however in algeria's debt so that you do have this extremely interesting phenomenon right now of a very radical arab state having done an enormous diplomatic service for the united states and in some way or another given the nature of middle east diplomacy and politics there will be something expected in return the diplomats here say it's going to be principally in the area of economics in diplomacy better bilateral relations but nobody here really expects that algeria's role as a

radical state in the arab world anti-israel is going to change all that much marvin how do you figure that you mean do you mean to say that algeria did this because they wanted something in return well i think it is the nature of middle east politics that when some state does something for another it wants something in return what algeria wants is a better international reputation it wants better economic relations with the united states clearly it's going to get that algeria also wants to be in a very fractionated arab world regarded as one of the leaders of the arab world and when bhume yen whose name goes along with the airport we've been looking at before

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we've been looking at before when budmaid yen was the leader in algeria there was no such leadership role but with the new leadership there is a diplomatic relationship with the united states that's established that has functioned very well as we've seen in the last couple of weeks algeria internationally now looks like an extremely respectable trading partner diplomatic friend yes it wanted something in return and no doubt we'll get it marvin you can't uh see uh from the state department what we're seeing here on the monitors but the picture that we had up for the last few minutes of your report is obviously well i think obviously the hostage plane which uh according to all the information we had was to have touched down a few more a few moments ago and this has given it time now to taxi into the to the algiers airport if i guess that's it we're we're not certain about these planes but that's a 727 and they had two 727s on this freedom flight um if that's the first one and this is we first saw the learjet come in we knew that was on the flight now we've seen a7 27 coming in and um we may see another it's going to be very hard to say but we ought to know in just a few minutes why don't we try keith miller and jim bitterman in algiers at the airport now maybe they can help us out identify go ahead gentlemen we don't believe that um the the play that is the hostages on it we believe it's the second plane and in fact i think it was a sign you're seeing right now we have one plane in front of and us

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we have one plane in front of and us second plane crashing into so much confusion filling up the passenger ramp for this plane son maybe that's a good sound we're waiting to see who comes out that door just as much as everyone else's i think passengers here judging by the hundreds of international classes from the nigerian government from the united states government i think that is quite true a few people that get this kind of reception at al joe's airport

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are near the nearest plane but uh there's still another plane to attract me in here [Music] the first thing we can see there are uh our we're seeing what appear to me to be algerians uh the little glimpse we had inside the door there uh looked to me like either algerian diplomats or doctors that does not necessarily mean that the hostages are not on this plane but at least the the very first we're seeing those are the diplomats who helped arrange the the deal the ambassador uh to iran the ambassador of the united states these are the men who have been working for so long there at the top of the stairs is mr mustafa the head of the national bank just coming down now in the light top coat if i'm if i'm correct and i think i am these are the diplomatic and financial negotiators who made the possible the release of the american hostages so far no hostages can be seen at the top of that ramp that's a mighty big airplane for half a dozen or a dozen or so diplomats isn't it or is the party oh the party is much bigger well it's larger than that and it may be that the some of the doctors that the algerians brought in to examine the american hostages are also coming off and it seems logical to me that the the diplomats and the banker would want to check with the president of the country and the foreign

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president of the country and the foreign minister of the country about the condition of the hostages and about the trip before they had what may amount to a kind of ceremonial opening up of that plane now that the rain is stopped or slowed down so i my guess is we may have to wait for another 7 27. roger i've been wrong so often just today on this story i've been wrong for 444 days but so of a lot of other people i think uh john everybody's batting average dipped several hundred points today trying to uh you you get so tied up of reporting the story hoping that it's true hoping that the plane is wheels up hoping it's left iranian airspace no i think uh that's that's a good clear signal from keith miller and jim bitterman and they're they're on the ground so let's go back to them [Music] roger we're not uh becky gotta walk with this and uh you folks are those were addicted to the negotiating team members who got up the tv off the plane first uh headed by the uh kennedy ambassador to washington who was uh the head of the algeria negotiating team and the man who really was very instrumental in this whole thing he's been in iran for several weeks now while the negotiations have been going on they've been very difficult negotiations um they began on this problem back in november of working on a hostage crisis and they stuck to it all along despite some talk at some point there on the line that in fact the algerians wanted to diminish their role or get out of it entirely because of the frustration they were feeling they didn't want to get in the middle of the hostage crisis and then find themselves developing best relations with one side or the other and they managed to do very well that that was one of their main concerns actually was being drawn in between the united states and iran and how to see someone with a gun

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someone with a gun i'm wondering if these might be some iranians who have accompanied the the hostages here it is difficult to tell that not just through algae and security come on [Music] so far he was still on the tarmac it is still raining fortunately not very heavily and many people are here as the hostages on board uh a member of algerian security or that i know the algorithms are awfully

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i know the algorithms are awfully conscious about security they have brought in since uh sunday as their sunday they've brought in about uh three or four hundred police who have uh very implying steeled off the airport uh when it looked like uh the there might be some breakthrough in the hostage crisis and then relax security tonight the security here is extremely tight i'm trying to think [Music] uh what's going to happen inside the vip lounge tonight is that uh the hostage will get off the algae inside will be offered some drinks they'll sit around and relax [Music] and uh during that time they'll uh be identified by the members of the american embassy staff that are here we're still waiting for the second plane to pull up we've seen no sign of that we saw a second plane land but it has not taxied over in this direction i think we're all becoming very very anxious impression that american medical people wanted their hostages immediately if you stop to begin a decompression after their long deal well i think they may want to get a little credit for the ring they played it certainly was a tricky role to play and it was a role that led to a victory uh

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led to a victory uh and i think that they want to at least make sure the world knows what they play they seem to have come out very good in both the eyes of revolutionary iran and in the eyes of the western world we're still getting to see what's happening here we're as anxious as you are to find out uh exactly who is on that plane and if that's gonna be the plane that's killing our hostages [Music] within the country they were able to spare them for this trip to just check their medical condition quickly as the people that the hostages are indeed on this plane we get a sub we have a thumbs up [Music] in another direction way out of the limelight the other 70 which has officials out the uh algerian foreign minister mr mohammed bin yukba who has been instrumental in these negotiations

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been instrumental in these negotiations is here at the empire tonight and he's probably one of those guys underneath the umbrella uh there's one interesting thing we would like to point out from washington and that is there appear to be photographers in that crowd at the bottom of the ramp uh that would lead us to believe that the hostages may in fact be on that plane and this crowd now with uh people who look like vips being escorted with umbrellas to the bottom of the ramp and the general attention i see a microphone now for what is a either we know that there's an iranian television crew there pardon me uh that we know that there are algerian crews there and we may be coming now to a moment when uh we might in fact see an american hostages they are certainly down there ready to record some important story uh now rick davis is with the lee family a family of one of the hostages in pasadena california [Music] okay bob we can hear chapter failing what's happening right now after all this waiting all the heart frustrations beating heart high blood pressure and happy as all get out oh mrs lee attention right now that natural happy tension you said [Music] you said earlier today you'd be able to recognize your son even if you didn't see his face that's right buy his walk oh yeah he's got a distinct walk and i imagine his beard is dragging to the ground he's grown since then oh he had one oh yeah oh but all america is feeling this way

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oh but all america is feeling this way yeah i might make it in this room tonight just just just feel all of it all of the happy tensions tremendously you still feel that that same love for everyone including the iranians that you spoke of earlier today it's double today it's doubled yeah if it's such a thing as double love it's double enough [Applause] oh oh what's going on there they are one two three four five get out of the way six right we have uh eight nine ten eleven one shaking hands twelve george lewis is with us george will you start identifying sure that in the foreground is elizabeth ann swift wearing the yellow ribbon in her hair one of the two women and behind her katherine kobe of fairfax virginia the other woman being held we think we saw the charges affair of bruce lyon somewhere in there is that bruce that's him that's him in the foreground oh listen listen to the sound from algiers for a moment the uh the happy reactions okay jerry plotkin the private businessman who was uh victor thompson who was being held in the foreign ministry michael howland regis reagan there's david roeder colonel thomas schaefer coming here today in the green sweater barry rosen the the fellow the balding fellow with the beer the press out of shay joseph hall just walking out to the right donald holman robert engelman just going to the right

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robert engelman just going to the right of the screen paul needham was after him oh my this is a fantastic moment we fee robert odie the oldest of the hostages 65 years old here comes barry rosen the press attack shay donald cupcake behind him the other young man in the beer frederick cupcake excuse me there he is right there right there [Applause] oh my always coming down the steps is that the top of the thomas ahern the hostage who was held in solitary confinement and he doesn't have that old green sweater oh he's looking around he's got a huge beard right there [Music] you'll get them gregory persinger behind him paul lewis oh okay michael muller marine sergeant theo big tall guy that's kiel that's keo he's the six foot nine the tallest of the hostages oh my bruce german of maryland oh get out of there richard wait wait grandma he's there yeah all right some of the comments you hear in the background from the hostages families very glad to see them on the ground william subic joseph subic colonel leland holland stephen lauterbach coming through the crowd sam gillette michael muller

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behind him uh another one of the marines james lopez of globe arizona paul lewis is behind him some of the men wearing the eagle t-shirts they got in christmas of 1979 from a dentist in indiana greg persinger william gallegos pueblo colorado steve curtly excuse me kevin hermann in oak creek wisconsin john mckeel [Music] they'll get them inside that's rodney sickman behind him and stephen curtly behind sigmund just now coming into view alan golisinski haven't seen any missing yet john you see uh warren christopher in the shot too he seems to be present on the ground with the hostages this is kind john this is kind of an exciting moment for

me and and the people who've been helping us spot these these hostages we've done a lot of research on them and and we feel like we've gotten to know them rather personally if we could add uh george you were getting some assistance during the spotlight jeremy lee is it his uh his father gary yeah gary mr mr lee's microphone was open right and and the groans of excitement uh was mr lee also identifying hostages as they came off the plane i i know we're excited here but they've really got to be excited out there to see these pictures george it seems to me that they are look physically healthy they are not stumbling they are marching right along that's what we were told in earlier accounts that most of the hostages appear to board the plane in a healthy condition a couple of them maybe looked a little tired a little

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maybe looked a little tired a little dazed but generally in pretty good shape after this long long ordeal [Applause] there's joseph subic john graves and isn't that thomas ahern jerry meow who came just came out of the picture colonel thomas schaefer [Applause] there's juan christopher right there taking his overcoat off a man who can round the clock for three or four days during the negotiating that was donald holman there in that last shot he's an army medic i believe he's from sacramento california we we've seen uh at least one hostage we did not see in the most recent films released from iran james lopez and i'm sure his family in arizona was very glad to see him at this point what we ought to do is if we can get keith miller and jim bitterman back on the line i assume they'll be allowed inside give us some reporting from uh from the vip line all right this is mr lee again finally got a good shot of his son on the on the telly he's right here come back come back come back go the other way the other way mr lee is uh turned into a television director and is ordering

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director and is ordering the cameraman uh 11 000 miles away to pan left so he can see his son there's william keough on the right and jerry plotkin the private businessman who entered the embassy 20 minutes before it was taken robert odey on the right william belk on the left richard moorfield bruce german charles jones the only black philip ward steve steven lauderback greg persinger they're flashing on almost too fast for us to identify joseph subic colonel bruce german the young man with the mustache there just a great moment today for your country in my country thank god the algerians for getting us released this is joseph subic talking leland holland is on his left [Music] you see he's turning around elizabeth swift in the background there patting her hair steven lauterbach bert moore on the right in the red coat there's elizabeth ann swift wearing the yellow ribbon in her hair we also saw her wearing a yellow ribbon at christmas time she's talking to john limbert we were told earlier tonight as the hostages left tehran that there was a glad reunion scene at the airport some of the hostages had been kept obviously in small groups isolated from some of the other groups and they were very very happy to see each other as they boarded the plane together at the tehran airport

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together at the tehran airport a lot of laughter and a lot of tears there's katherine kobe she she's lost a lot of weight since the beginning of this ordeal she mentioned that a couple of times in some of the film clips she spent her time in captivity going on a diet robert odie on the left i think he may be this is odie here in a close up his wife lives in sun city arizona not in an islamic country i wouldn't think so there's frederick we did not see him in some of the recent films there's william gallegos on the left he's a marine corporal from pueblo [Music] colorado kevin hermann the youngest of the hostages was in the background of that shot that's michael muller on the left his wife and two daughters live in quantico virginia joseph hall is the bearded fellow in the

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joseph hall is the bearded fellow in the blue shirt no excuse me donald holman is the fellow in the blue shirt joe hall is in between not quite visible in this shot with us in the studio is lloyd rollins he was one of the hostages captured originally among the group of 13 women and blacks released in the third week of the seizure of the embassy how do they look to you mr rollins oh they look good it looks good to see them out they've changed uh a little on the features but overall they look good there's a warren christopher talking we can't hear what he's saying as he's talking to joe subic one of the hostages how has their appearance changed over this time a lot of them have let their hair grow there's some beards some have lost weight some have lost some of uh seems as though they've thinned out some look like they're in better physical condition than they were before we know that among the marines a lot of them spent time lifting weights doing exercises to try to keep in shape there's it's bert moore he was your boss my boss how does he look to you now looks good looks good to see you man can you kind of sum up your feelings at this point does it bring back memories of your own escape from iran in a way it does but it sort of

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in a way it does but it sort of completes it for me uh they're all out they're safe and it seems like i've just finished a phase of a year that's had me attached to them emotionally and now i now they're out safe and uh i just can't express it it's gonna be a feeling this now before i come down did you feel guilty that you got out early in this thing and the rest had to stay behind no i didn't no i didn't i didn't have guilt feelings i was sorry to see him left behind but i was glad to get out and you also knew from the comments of the hostages as they stayed behind they were glad to see the first group go too some of them said that in some of the statements that were released on iranian television yes yes they were they were glad to see us out also i just i'm glad they're out now i just wished it had been sooner but any time is better than no time the the one hostage that i was able to talk to during the siege william gallegos told us that the first couple of weeks were the worst part for the hostages you had hold on a second we were getting some more commentary on tarmac uh are you hearing by the way are you hearing the interviews that are being conducted by the rta do you hear their sound inside in the middle of we don't really hear it's very difficult all we hear is this sign of the room in the noise in the room in the room noise in the room we don't hear the specific interviews and uh the sound is not very good the

00:48:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=2880s)

and uh the sound is not very good the microphones aren't very close and now jim we aren't hearing any sound at all from the rope jim bitterman can you hear me [Music] standby gentlemen in algiers we're going to pick it up from here you just saw charles jones there and we don't exactly know if they're about to make a statement or what in algiers you said earlier mr rollins that there were a number of things you wanted to reserve to say about your time in captivity until the hostages were out and safe what kind of horror stories were there in those first two weeks in the embassy what did they do to you well um during the first part of the captivity our hands were tied very tightly at one point on the second day of captivity we were a number of hostages myself were tied around the ambassador's dining room table tied to chairs and blindfolded and some of us were even gagged and there were guns being waved in our faces threats being made and then later on as they got to know us the guns disappeared weapons disappeared and they they tried to reassure us that we weren't going to be hurt there were threats made in the first few days there were threats we heard stories of russian roulette being played yes there was russian well i played with two of the secretaries and uh who were released along with you in the early part of the uh the seizure that's correct that's

00:50:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=3000s)

the seizure that's correct that's correct they actually aimed guns at their head loaded guns put a bullet in the chamber and spun the chamber and they and they pulled off they uh clicked the trigger off on a couple of the girls uh were they trying to extract confessions were they trying to get information why were they doing this they were trying to uh get information from them what caught what caused the change why did they why did they tone down the terror tactics because they weren't working they weren't getting the information they

wanted [Music] they knew that what they had done was illegal and there were there was some feelings of apprehension on the part of some of them especially when we talked up to them they'd sort of back away from us leave us alone i think you told one of our people earlier on that there was a safe house on the embassy grounds where some of the hostages might have been able to hold out against the uh against the militants yes yes there was tell me about that it was underneath the warehouse where my office was it was a a full vault it was bomb proof bulletproof steel doors we had water and air and air conditioning system and radios unfortunately most of the people were pinned down in their offices when the students and the militants came through the gate that uh november the 4th around 10 o'clock and they weren't able to get out of the building they were lulled into the false security that it was just a demonstration and that the police would remove them from the grounds so they didn't think it would be anything like this anything like this lengthy seizure none of the stuff that was going to end like this or be this long there were certain hints were there not more than hints advice to washington that there was going to be trouble if the shah of iran were admitted to the united states and those warnings were ignored right

00:52:01 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=3121s)

and those warnings were ignored right well i can't honestly say that they were fully ignored because president carter ordered mr langan to go to uh premier uh barzagan who was head of the provisional government at that time and get assurances from him that we would be protected in the case of trouble the problem was barzagon couldn't protect us who wasn't there though a pretty clear indication from tehran to washington that there was going to be trouble if the shah were brought into the united states yes yes it was what should we have done that we didn't do to protect that embassy better well in hindsight one of the things uh we possibly could have done was could have downscaled the embassy in other words put a lot of people out on a little rest and recuperation um we could have probably taken more precautions um uh such as uh making sure that uh a number of our people were not on the compound at the same time that only a percentage of them were for several days that's another thing that we do um there were any number of things that we could have done but we just did not realize that it was going to end like this do you think that the hostages in this group that some of them will be bitter if there wasn't more support from washington that that they were permitted to be so vulnerable i don't know i'm sure that they're going to discuss the the sequence of things that have happened since they were captured i think there'll be a range of emotions there possibly will be some that are bitter when you heard about the attempt to rescue the hostages how did you feel that that that was the right thing to do or that that was putting them in unnecessary danger

00:54:01 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=3241s)

putting them in unnecessary danger i personally felt it was the right thing to do do you think some of the people inside the embassy will feel the same way we'll express that same emotion certainly i'm sure they will we heard stories from the vietnam era of the pows saying they were waiting sometimes hoping to hear the sound of bombs in hanoi do you think that kind of feeling will be felt among among this group well i know it existed even before i uh was released after the first week we were hoping to hear something machine gun fire a bomb a jet streaking overhead were we too soft in handling the iranian crisis then should we have used more military force and earlier that's something that i'm not really qualified to say i i really don't know what you say among your group there was that that hope that some some sound of gunfire or bombs falling would be heard yes some sign of support did you feel unsupported left out well logic leaves you when you're not getting any information uh when you're not receiving any information and uh you're being given propaganda saying that certain things are happening uh you feel as though uh as though you've been left alone and now logically you know it's not true you know that someone is worried about you but uh it's it sort of leaves you when you're when you're when you don't have any information at all you begin to think that you're deserted and a number of us felt that way mr rollins the hostages will go from here to wiesbaden west germany for a period of cooling off a decompression period with the doctors do you think that if some of those hostages want to go home right away they should be permitted to or should should the advice to them be to kind of cool it for a few days and get your thoughts to get it well you know the good lord made all of us different um uh

00:56:02 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=3362s)

us different um uh i would uh hope that they would uh take the advice of the doctors and and sort of just cool it sort of get their thoughts together but for some maybe it will be the best thing for them to go home for me it wasn't uh i needed that time and so did the rest of the people in my group lloyd rollins thank you very much this is uh this is a happy reunion for the two of us i last saw you in tehran 16 days after the embassy was taken as you were leaving and i was staying on so it's good to be here with you tonight john thank you i think we all owe a vote of thanks to mr rollins who had his ordeal and obviously has it pretty well squared off in his head now and has been extremely helpful to us tonight uh there is the scene in the airport in algiers the hostages are on their folding chairs in this large room and i believe that at one end the officials of the american government and the algerian government are seated around a table with a microphone which may mean that the formal part of this ceremony uh begins the hostages having been welcomed in an islamic or arab way with refreshment it would now be suitable under the rules in that part of the world for some sort of formal welcome or statement or declaration to come from the algerian government which had so much to do with its uh their release now there is warren christopher the second ranking man in the state department on the left and i believe that may be muhammad bin yahia the foreign minister of algeria but i'm not absolutely certain an algerian official yes uh the two foreign of elders of the 19th january 1981

00:58:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=3480s)

of the 19th january 1981 invested earth with a responsibility delivering to us in taiwan the 52 american nationals who are now in our years the iranian request appears to us as an act of trust to what we are giving people which revolution its leaders and it testifies lefty qualities of esteem and the fears of brotherhood existing between graduating people and the iranian people this responsibility we have accepted with a clean awareness that it was a heavy one and with the feeling of fulfilling the duty will be catered to us by the exercise of our obligations at international level we are discharging this duty with the dedication required by such a momentous mission in fulfillment of the obligations with the iranian government has entrusted us with it's therefore my duty at this moment to deliver your fellow citizen to you mr christopher who officially represents the american government here mr minister uh members of the

01:00:03 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=3603s)

mr minister uh members of the algerian negotiating team ladies and gentlemen colleagues and friends i have the great honor and privilege to act on behalf of the united states in affirming that you are back home and safely in our hands this event answers our prayers and we are more than delighted to accept the responsibility of seeing to it that you return to your homes and your families i couldn't complete this occasion without paying my deepest respect to the government alva algiers out of algeria its president its foreign minister its negotiating team and its foreign office they have devoted themselves with great professionalism great impartiality high skill and enormous courage to make possible today's event i particularly want to acknowledge the contribution of the foreign minister on my left whose dedication to this problem over the last two months has been almost incredible during the last week i believe that the foreign minister has devoted on many days 20 hours a day to the problem and i know there have been several nights in a row leading up to today when he has not slept so mr minister i'm deeply indebted to you as are all of my colleagues and friends on the chairs around the room who are deeply indebted to your government which has performed this humanitarian role

01:02:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=3720s)

humanitarian role with such high skills today's event would not be taking place without the role of your government and will be playing that again [Applause] do [Applause] [Music] yes the beginning of us that's bruce langan who was the senior american diplomat among the hostages acting diplomatically thanking the government of algeria for its hospitality and its work other hostages expressing their thanks to warren

christopher and on his right harold saunders the assistant secretary of state for that part of the world we have identified here at nbc we have identified 50 of the hostages george lewis who knows them better than anyone at nbc is watching this and will interrupt or yell at me if he sees somebody we haven't identified so far

01:04:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=3840s)

haven't identified so far foreign minister ben yahia says they have identified all 50 john we think we're we've identified all of them by now we we think we have positive ids in all 52. that's john graves there in the beard which one rotor behind him and gregory persinger behind him in this in the light-colored sweater stephen lotterbach [Music] who's that that's david dougherty richard daugherty richard richard it's been a long time there's holland assistant security officer that's michael holland the assistant security officer thomas ahern there's golis michael golisinski he's the alan lloyd rollins who was one of the original hostages who was released in the third week of this crisis is sitting here with me helping to identify these people it's bert moore wearing army fatigues he's a civilian but he's wearing army fatigues here charles jones of detroit bruce german bruce german of rockville maryland richard that's richard moorefield from san diego california jerry plotkin sherman oaks california private businessman who entered the embassy 20 minutes before it was taken that's donald sharer we haven't seen too many pictures of him throughout this crisis victor tomseth one of the three men who were held at the foreign ministry throughout most of this let his hair grow thomas shaffer and to his right believe that's jerry meely the the baldish fellow with beer and

01:06:02 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=3962s)

the the baldish fellow with beer and william keough six foot nine tallest of the hostages i don't know how tall warren christopher is but you can see keo towering over him here his wife is the head of flag the family liaison action group the the hostage family group that uh worked with the state department made statements through the news media throughout this thing in support of their hostage husbands brothers and so on that's claire barnes he lives his wife lives in virginia and he's not married okay his mother lives in virginia gotta get got to keep the biographies straight there's philip ward of culpepper virginia moorhead kennedy we haven't seen moorhead kennedy in any of the films that were released throughout this uh whole ordeal joseph subic leland holland robert engelman he's a navy lieutenant commander michael muller the head of the marine guard detail at the u.s embassy joseph hall told his wife sherry at christmas i can hang in there if you can kid malcolm calp donald homan regis reagan charles scott robert odey as we said before the oldest of the hostages at 65 he had retired from the state department he came to iran to fill in for a friend when the embassy was taken he was about to leave gary lee [Music] elizabeth ann swift katherine kobe fairfax virginia she was the one who sang away in a manger at

01:08:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=4080s)

the one who sang away in a manger at christmas time john limberton catherine kobe's family lives in iowa she most recently lived in the washington d.c area john limbert at christmas time apologized to his family for the inconvenience he caused them a little harder to make out this group barry rosen the press attache on the left william royer william belk and on the right the young marine steve curtly frederick cupcake in the beard the the man just going out of the left hand side of the screen paul lewis and william gallegos kevin hermanning the youngest of the hostages donald cook harmony's mother visited him just before the rescue mission paul needham in the red shirt there he was on temporary duty at the embassy when it was taken a lot of people there just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time so we have identified all 52 of the hostages and they all appear to be in pretty good shape i would say john they are uh as far as we can tell physically they look very good now this is a the airplane on which i believe they

01:10:02 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=4202s)

a the airplane on which i believe they will return to american control in wiesbaden west germany that's a c9 medevac aircraft called nightingale and this will be the next stage it's about two hours and 36 minutes flight from uh bumidian airport to frankfurt mine airport in west germany near frankfurt and after that it's a 30 mile

drive to the hospital at wiesbaden so there's still a lot of traveling for these people their total travel today will amount to something on a zigzag order of about 4 000 miles so that i guess they'll have to go through a whole day without any sleep well when you travel between countries in europe to and from you always lose a whole day out of your life and of course this is uh this is one of them they'll have to have to do without although i'm sure the excitement will get them through most of it rick rick davis is now again with the lee family in pasadena and we're going to go back to him to find out how the lees like what they saw rick we have heard a lot of shouts in here among them there he is and thank god is that your attitude today absolutely 100 rick there's no doubt about it he looks good and he's smiling does he look you haven't seen a picture of him in quite a long time has there been a difference in him that you could see he's much thinner and of course he didn't cut his hair he let his beard grow but he was smiling that's what i was looking for i don't know about hazel but he was smiling and he was animated mrs lee can you hold back those tears long enough to even talk to her yes i feel like earl does when i saw this last smile it was a normal smile a warm smile and the movements of his body were better when i first saw him i thought he looked really [Music] slow [Music]

01:12:03 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=4323s)

[Music] his reactions have been good and happy that smile and is the way he greeted the men was was his his way of doing it the feeling of excitement in this room for all your friends and all the members of the congregation is a little overwhelming yes it is it is totally overwhelming and by the nation i mean because what we're feeling here the whole nation is free there's no doubt about that mrs lee earlier in the day you were talking to me about patriotism do you feel like a patriotic person right now oh i certainly do i'm proud of my country you know in algeria as well and i think patriotism is really running higher and listen rick patriotism is not corny no i don't think it is i don't think anybody could think that way no way no way oh my see him again there nope not he flashed by for a moment he's sitting over there oh was there any time for a time in this 444 days that you thought maybe this isn't going to happen oh yes yes i i thought that sometimes that it might not happen uh just in the way we're seeing it but there's all that hope the anchor of the soul i'm going to leave up the flag i can't take it down i mean until gary comes i don't know i'm going to leave up the christmas tree lights too i've been looking for excuse not to take them down i'm going to leave them up oh christmas tree lights and a house full of flowers and a lot of prayers said today oh my of thanksgiving oh my from around the world i tell you and lots of food how about that yes looks like gary gary could stand a few pounds yes but that's all right well if this congregation keeps baking as it has been for the last couple of days you'll get those pounds back oh my that is for sure i tell you mr christopher and those men deserve

01:14:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=4440s)

christopher and those men deserve such such great praise from us wouldn't that be nice thank you very much mr mrs lee what the what the newly freed americans are doing of course is waiting for their their planes to be refueled for the flight on to uh to frankfurt west germany and i suppose uh it requires a certain amount of diplomatic documentation to be prepared and for the release to pass through algerian airspace and everything seems to be on an even keel from algiers but it's simply a matter of coming in refueling and then re-boarding and i suppose all three planes would go on with the uh the medevac planes have been in in time now two have been fueled yeah they came in earlier and uh they so that my guess is that the aircraft are probably ready it's the paperwork and you see some going on there now that is uh that may be not exactly holding it up i don't think anybody thought that this would take less than about an hour and the hostages just came off the plane about 45 minutes ago so that uh people with last names a through k will go in the first aircraft with the tail number 80 i believe and the people whose names of the latter part of the alphabet will go through

01:16:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=4560s)

part of the alphabet will go through the second aircraft park a little ways up this direction the sale number of h1 have a good fight one of the sure signs of return to the control of the united states government is being told to line up according to your initials there is probably uh nothing that uh is so accurate a portrayal of a homecoming as uh a decays go in one plane l disease go in the next plane and a decays from eight to nine and l to z ten to eleven it's a very happy occasion but that's quite a practical and very us government note that we saw added to it at this moment anyway they're they seem to be organizing themselves and on their way after an incredible ordeal that will go down into the history books and this long chapter is now finally coming toward an end for people who travel around the world as some of us have done here there is often something very nice about getting aboard an american airliner a very particular feeling about it if you've been out in the field in a strange and exotic place none of us has had an experience like 444 days in captivity in a strange and exotic place so we can only guess how it will feel to sink into that seat on that airplane tonight we just informed john that doug retner is with debbie plotkin in california and we want to check in with them

01:18:08 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=4688s)

i think though just for for purposes of editorial uh line we ought to stay with the pictures of these people before we switch out to retina why don't we just hold here and watch the americans board we've got a welcoming group there along the fence that's an algerian crowd or perhaps some of the american personnel from the u.s embassy has have come out to greet them give them a little boost on their on their next leg that must be a to k leaving now go to the plane with 80 on the tail l to z with [Music] eighty-one why would they wait to break up alphabetically until they got to algiers why would they have i think because they were loaded in a kind of haphazard way by the iranians and you'll recall roger that when they were taken just after dark earlier today after dark tehran excuse me i don't want to get in the way of that we just heard one of them shout god bless america [Music] one name we didn't mention when we were identifying the hostages earlier was michael matrenko he was one of the people who had not been seen in a long time and we did see him this time in the rush of recognizing all these hostages we did not mention him but we did see all 52 and identify all 52 positively

01:20:04 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=4804s)

52 positively the pentagon tells me that these c9 aircraft are configured uh in a number of ways we don't know how this this one is set up the military told me that this can carry litter cases if need be all of the hostages are obviously ambulatory and able to to sit up and walk around but they are prepared aboard those aircraft for any medical eventuality this is the military version of the dc-9 jetliner and george the other night we had a story on this aircraft i think or one like it and i did remember seeing seats aboard it regular airline seats it can be equipped with regular airline seats or it can be quickly converted to litters depending on the condition of the people it's carrying i would imagine that this is inside we haven't seen inside of it tonight but it's probably set up pretty much as a normal dc-9 airliner would be set up what's the flight time up to frankfort two hours and 40 minutes rogers i was saying earlier while you were making your way back from the inauguration and we were we were told that uh reuters news agency reported out of with tehran that when the hostages were taken to the airport in buses there were groups of pre-positioned i would have to say iranian demonstrators there shouting death to carter down with the united states some signs printed they were under the direction of organized cheerleaders these iranians and iranian television crews or film crews were showing the hostages passing through this what has to be called a propaganda exercise not that there aren't iranians who feel that way about the great satan as they call it the united states but i mean this was just

01:22:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=4920s)

mean this was just staged and it added it seemed to me a singularly ungraceful note to the end of this chapter as far as the iranians are concerned they also have a film crew here in algiers tonight filming the uh ceremony that we just saw so they'll be making some propaganda hay out of it john uh a moment ago we thought we were going to switch out to california and didn't let's try it again to doug bruckner who is with

debbie plotkin debbie plotkin is the wife of jerry pluck and he's the los angeles businessman private citizen who just happened to be in the embassy and was taken hostage debbie you said he looked good but he wasn't smiling and you had a theory for that i did i thought no no this has been one of those days no i i don't think they realize maybe that's that we're getting these pictures at home some of them maybe not realizing that their families are sitting here watching them what if he knew you were watching oh he i i know he'd jump up and down and wave and say hi mom hi deb you know i'm okay i'm fine i'm fine physically how does he look to you he looked real well they all looked well uh it was a tremendous boost to see how well they were the smiles on their faces the relaxed um attitude uh in comparison to like the christmas films where they a lot of them seem very tense and very strange what was your first thought when you saw him coming down that ramp i thought ah it is a it's official it's finally over i knew once i saw him and he got off that plane that i noticed for real you are one hostage wife who is not going to go to west germany you plan to go to washington and you felt pretty strongly about that could you explain i think it would interfere tremendously with the next couple days of interaction for my husband uh sharing experiences with the other hostages i'm afraid that if i were there he would want to isolate himself with me and i

01:24:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=5040s)

want to isolate himself with me and i just don't feel that's appropriate for him i think he needs this couple days to share experiences uh there seems to be a strong bond of camaraderie i sense that and they're coming off the plane it's a very important time for them a few hours from now you're going to get a chance to talk to him by telephone and what are you going to say i'm going to say why didn't you smile i saw you on the television and you didn't smile um i'm just going to tell him that i love him very much and it's over now and in a few days we're going to be together again debbie plotkin wife of hostage jerry watkin this is doug bruckner in los angeles mrs popkin is certainly self-confident and strong and has a bright cheerful outlook about the whole experience i guess what they should have done was flashed a sign to her husband that read smile you're on candid camera before he got off the plane the john dancy is standing by with a sociologist graham spanier who's been studying some of these activities and who has some thoughts on what it may in fact be like when the hostages arrive in west germany suddenly begin seeing an american environment suddenly begin to realize what has happened to them john would you go ahead please yes dr spanier you were part of the task force which made recommendations to the state department that in fact the hostages spend some time in west germany sort of decompressing why was that well i think as uh some have pointed out tonight in the broadcast it's very important for them to have a period of time in which they can adjust to the fatigue that i'm sure they're experiencing now from not having slept there'll be some jet lag they need to have time to consider their nutritional status what sort of problems are they likely to have as a result of all this long captivity well i think it'll be highly variable some of them may have no problems whatsoever they looked remarkably healthy and and fit as has been pointed out

01:26:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=5160s)

fit as has been pointed out and some of them will be able to adjust very quickly in terms of their health and in terms of their psychological status others may have problems with the re-entry period ranging from nutritional issues problems perhaps with a letdown after having received an intense amount of attention for a period of time and then less afterwards we know for a fact that hostages in other situations from vietnam for example have come back and found that this period of captivity has in fact affected their marriages is that likely to happen i think it's hard to generalize certainly that's possible but i also see the possibility of some marriages being strengthened as a result of this period of time that they've had a part certainly there's been an unprecedented amount of attention uh to the families and the families have been able to keep in touch quite a bit with what's happening dr spanier thank you let's go back to john and roger john norma quarles has set up an interview with a hermiting family in milwaukee and we want to go out and talk to her norma any of all those that i did see on tv all the hostages x hostages did look good but i think kevin looked in very good shape is it strange to call him an ex hostage and how does that feel yeah it feels a little bit strange but everybody should get used to it because we'll make that mistake several times what did you want to say to

him i was really trying to reach out and almost touch him a little bit or or anything and when we saw him when i pointed him out that one time it was like he acknowledged that i did recognize he was there thank you very much

01:28:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9DW0N4qZ_U&t=5280s)

thank you very much is the american ambassador that's alright hanes with the beard 14 months continuously but sometimes and he's the american ambassador to algeria he also greeted the hostages this is what i understand now and so it looks as though it's wrapping up in algiers uh it will take them something on the order of two hours and 40 minutes but probably a little more because they've got a clear and get clearance from the tower at algiers to fly across the mediterranean and uh so let's say two hours and 45 minutes to three hours when the hostages will be arriving at the rhine mine air base near frankfurt in west germany and in disembarking from the aircraft getting on the buses and heading for a temporary safe haven a resting place at the american hospital at wiesbaden we're going to stop our coverage now because there's nothing really else to show you but when those hostages arrive in west germany nbc news will be on the air and we intend to cover all the developments in this story all the developments in this story today tonight and even tomorrow we have president carter leaving for west germany tomorrow to meet with him so that uh that will conclude momentarily temporarily our coverage here tonight roger mudd thanks very much and we'll be back later this has been a special report from nbc news

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